



## **NOTICE**

- MEETING:** Committee of the Whole
- DATE:** Wednesday February 18<sup>th</sup>, 2026
- TIME:** 5:30pm (Immediately Following the Council Meeting)
- PLACE:** Council Chambers, 8296 Highway 7, Sherbrooke

Please Advise If Unable To Attend



# Municipality of the District of St. Mary's

Committee of the Whole (COTW) Meeting  
Wednesday, February 18<sup>th</sup>, 2026

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*We acknowledge that we are gathering in Mi'kmaqi the traditional unceded territory of the Mi'kmaq people.*

1. Call to Order
2. Roll Call
3. Additions to the Agenda
4. Approval of the Agenda
5. Approval of Minutes of COTW held Wednesday February 4<sup>th</sup>, 2026
6. Business Arising from Minutes
7. Correspondence
  - a. Letter from Robin MacDougall regarding Childcare Facility
  - b. Letter from Christopher McCreery, MVO, Secretary of the Order of Nova Scotia regarding Call for Nominations to the Order of Nova Scotia
8. Other Matters of Business
  - a. Staff Report – Volunteer & First Responder & Healthcare Appreciation Event
9. In-Camera: Contract Negotiations and Personnel Matters

Adjournment



*We acknowledge that we are gathering in Mi'kma'ki the traditional unceded territory of the Mi'kmaq people.*

### **1. Meeting, Date & Time:**

Warden Fuller called the COTW Meeting of the St. Mary's Municipal Council to order on Wednesday, February 4<sup>th</sup>, 2026, at 5:00pm in the Council Chambers, Sherbrooke, N.S.

### **2. Attending:**

Warden James Fuller  
Deputy Warden Beulah Malloy  
Councillor Dana O'Connell  
Councillor Scott Beaver  
Councillor Emma Tibbo

### **Also Attending:**

Lesley McFarlane, Chief Administrative Officer (CAO)  
Jadzia Rudolph, Municipal Clerk  
Janelle Fleet, Interim Municipal Clerk  
Keren Ruller, Director of Economic Development

### **3. Additions to the Agenda:**

- a. Addition to #7 Correspondence item b. East River St. Mary's volunteer fire department support request.
- b. Addition to #8 Other Matters of Business item c. Water Main Leak Repair.

### **4. Approval of the Agenda:**

*On the motion of Councillor Tibbo and seconded by Councillor O'Connell, Council approved the agenda with the additions.*

***Motion approved.***

### **5. Approval of Minutes:**

*On the motion of Warden Fuller, hearing no errors or omission to the previous minutes, Council approved the minutes of the COTW Meeting held January 21<sup>st</sup>, 2026.*

***Motion approved.***

### **6. Business Arising from the Minutes:**

- a. A Staff Report was presented on funding provided to Christmas at Sherbrooke Village.
  - Please see the Agenda/Package for the Staff Report.
  - Council directed staff to inform Sherbrooke Village that the municipality is accepting applications for grants to organizations until February 17<sup>th</sup> at 4:00pm.

### **7. Correspondence:**

***Warden Fuller declared "Conflict of Interest".***

***Deputy Warden Malloy chaired the meeting.***

- a. Eastern Counties Regional Library (ECRL) Letter regarding Budgeting for 2026-27.
  - Please see the Agenda/Package for the correspondence.
  - ECRL is asking council to consider a one-time addition to the current library funding up to \$2,000 solely for the purchase of new materials.
  - Council agreed to consider ECRL's request in budget deliberations.

***Warden Fuller resumed chairing the meeting.***

- b. East River St. Mary's volunteer fire department support request.
  - East River St. Mary's volunteer fire department has requested council write a letter in support of the project to repair the roof on the fire hall.
  - The fire hall needs roof repair, insulation replacement, lighting upgrades and possibly a heat pump depending on the quotes the fire hall receives for the projected work.

*On recommendation of Councillor O'Connell, seconded by Deputy Warden Malloy, Council agreed that the Warden draft a letter in support of the East River Volunteer Fire Department roof repair project.*

***Recommendation adopted.***

## **8. Other Matters of Business:**

- a. Staff Report – Staff Report – Low Income Property Tax Exemption for 2026/27
  - Staff prepared an option for Council's consideration using the same structure and applying a cost-of-living increase to the income range and exemption amount of last year's program. Similar to past practice, the consumer price index for December 2024 to December 2025 Nova Scotia All Items of 3.1% was used for Council's consideration. Staff noted that the CAP rate for PVSC was set at 2.6% for 2026-2027 property assessments which is based on NS CPI for November 2024 to November 2025.
  - For the purpose of budget considerations, the number of applicants has been projected to be slightly increased. Based on these considerations the budget for 2026/27 will be set at \$20,000 which is under the \$25,000 budgeted for 2025-2026.

*On recommendation of Councillor Beaver seconded by Councillor Tibbo, Council agree to approve the 2026/2027 Application for Residential Low Income Property Tax Exemption with the annual household income range threshold and the tax exemption credit amounts as laid out in the table below, and all other eligibility requirements as outlined in the application.*

<b>Proposed 2026-2027 Low Income Property Tax Exemption</b>			
<i>Total Income Range</i>	<i>Tax Exemption Amount</i>	<i>Number of Applicants</i>	<i>Total Expense</i>
\$25,776-\$29,899	\$ 210	17	3,570
\$20,621-\$25,775	\$ 260	27	7,020
\$15,446-\$20,620	\$ 310	5	1,550
\$0-\$15,465	\$ 365	15	5,475
<b>Total</b>		<b>64</b>	<b>\$ 17,615</b>

***Recommendation adopted.***

b. Staff Report – Climate Ready Plans and Processes Program Next Steps

- Please see agenda/package for the staff report.
- A revised approach was recommended, to leverage existing arrangements with the Clean Foundation to complete key actions in the municipality’s Climate Change Action Plan, instead of committing additional funds to renew the Plan.
- Directing Clean Foundation resources to assist the municipality to achieve the action items of highest priority and benefit within the municipality’s Climate Change Action Plan leverages existing contracts to deliver on tangible commitments to benefit the local community. Pending substantive completion of the Climate Change Action Plan, the plan can be refreshed, with community input.
- This approach will allow focus to remain on implementing actions impacting the community at this time, prior to updating the Climate Change Action Plan. The proposed approach would eliminate the expense for the \$7,000 municipal contribution in addition to \$1,000 of staff time and resources.

*On recommendation of Deputy Warden Malloy seconded by Councillor O’Connell, Council agree to direct staff to leverage the existing partnership with Clean Foundation Nova Scotia to deliver on the municipality’s Climate Change Action Plan and withdraw from the Local Leadership for Climate Adaptation (LLCA -24-0485) Climate Ready Plans and Processes program.*

***Recommendation adopted.***

c. Water Main Leak Repair

- The CAO provided a verbal update regarding the water leak, thanking the public for their support and affected water utility customers for their patience.
- On Tuesday February 3<sup>rd</sup>, Public Works staff, with the support of contractors, resolved the leak identified on January 30. Council wishes to recognize Public Works operators Brennan MacKay, Christian Bonnevie and Matthew Teichmann for their outstanding work in resolving the issue.

## 9. In-Camera: Contract Negotiations

*On motion of Councillor O'Connell seconded by Councillor Tibbo, Council agree to move In-Camera for Contract Negotiations at 5:42pm.*

***Motion approved.***

*On motion of Deputy Warden Malloy seconded by Councillor O'Connell, Council agree to reconvene to regular session at 6:50pm.*

***Motion approved.***

## Adjournment

*On motion of Warden Fuller there being no further matters of business, Council adjourned at 6:50pm.*

***Motion approved.***

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Recorded By  
Janelle Fleet, Interim Municipal Clerk

Approved By  
Warden Fuller

Robin MacDougall  
Child and Youth Care Practitioner, St Mary's Education Center/Academy  
Robin.MacDougall@srce.ca  
902 631 2807

January 16<sup>th</sup>, 2026

Mr. James Fuller  
District #5  
Warden  
Denver, Newtown, Fishers Mills, Eight Island Lake, Argyle, Goshen & Area  
(902) 704-0268  
[james.fuller@saint-marys.ca](mailto:james.fuller@saint-marys.ca)

Dear Mr. Fuller

Re: Proposal for a Child Care Facility in Sherbrooke, NS

I am writing to present a proposal and seeking councils support and assistance for the establishment of a licensed childcare facility in Sherbrooke, Nova Scotia, through a collaborative, shared-space model involving Kids First Family Resource Centre, St. Mary's Education Centre/Academy, and the Municipality of the District of St. Mary's.

As you are aware, access to affordable and high-quality early learning and childcare in rural communities such as ours remains a significant challenge. Families in the Sherbrooke area are facing long waitlists, limited options, and the associated barriers this creates for workforce participation and family well-being.

This proposal outlines a co-located facility that would address these gaps while leveraging existing community assets. The vision is to create a childcare centre—located within the St. Mary's Education Centre/Academy building—that would serve infants, toddlers, and preschool-aged children in a licensed, year-round setting. The facility would operate in partnership with:

- Kids First Family Resource Centre, offering wraparound parenting and early intervention supports.
- St. Mary's Education Centre/Academy, allowing for natural transitions from childcare to school and the shared use of space and services.
- The Municipality of the District of St. Mary's, contributing support through planning, development, and potential funding or in-kind assistance.

Key benefits of this approach include:

- The addition of up to 30+ new licensed child care spaces in our region;
- Seamless transitions into pre-primary and primary education;
- Greater support for young families and children through integrated services;

- Economic and social development by enabling more parents—particularly women—to rejoin the workforce.

We envision a modular or renovated space operated by qualified early childhood educators, potentially drawing on provincial and federal funding streams such as the Canada–Nova Scotia Canada-Wide Early Learning and Child Care Agreement. We believe that with the right partnerships and shared commitment, we can make this facility a reality—and a model for rural childcare in Nova Scotia.

The next steps would involve formal stakeholder consultation, a feasibility review of space (including any opportunities within or near the school), and engagement with provincial funding agencies. I would welcome the opportunity to meet and discuss how we might move this project forward collaboratively.

Thank you for considering this important initiative. I look forward to the possibility of working together to support families and strengthen our community through accessible, high-quality childcare.

Sincerely,

Robin MacDougall

Child and Youth Care Practitioner St Marys Education Center/Academy

Robin.MacDougall@srce.ca

902 631 2807





## THE ORDER OF NOVA SCOTIA

2 February 2026  
HALIFAX

Warden James Fuller  
Municipality of the District of St. Mary's  
PO Box 296  
Sherbrooke, NS B0J 3C0

Dear Warden Fuller,

In 2026, the Order of Nova Scotia officially celebrates its 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary, marking a quarter-century of honoring excellence in Nova Scotia. I have been asked by the Chancellor of the Order of Nova Scotia, His Honour the Honourable Mike Savage, to remind you that nominations to the Order of Nova Scotia may be made up until Thursday, April 30<sup>th</sup>, 2026.

As a leader in your community, you are in an exceptional position to help recognize the work of exemplary citizens and those who have contributed to the life and vibrancy of our province.

You can download further information about the Order, along with electronic nomination forms via <https://novascotia.ca/iga/order.asp>. Should you require additional information or material, please do not hesitate to contact Ms. Julie Langille, Chief of Protocol at 902-424-4194, or [julie.langille@novascotia.ca](mailto:julie.langille@novascotia.ca). You may also contact me directly at 902-424-7050, or [christopher.mccreery@novascotia.ca](mailto:christopher.mccreery@novascotia.ca).

The closing date for 2026 nominations is Thursday, April 30<sup>th</sup>. The Lieutenant Governor and Advisory Council very much appreciate your assistance in this matter.

With all kind regards,

Yours sincerely,

Christopher McCreery, MVO  
Secretary of the Order of Nova Scotia



## Volunteer, First Responder & Healthcare Appreciation

### Department of Community Development & Recreation

#### SUMMARY

The Municipality currently delivers multiple appreciation events to recognize volunteers and first responders and planned to host an event for health care workers. While these events reflect the Municipality's commitment to inclusion and recognition, attendance at the Volunteer Appreciation Event has declined, and nominations for the First Responders' Event have decreased significantly following the inaugural year.

At the same time, the scope of recognition has expanded to include additional groups, increasing administrative and logistical requirements. Each event requires a comparable investment of time and resources regardless of attendance levels. In light of participation trends and multiple Council priorities for community development and recreation, combining appreciation events is recommended.

#### BACKGROUND

The Municipality currently hosts multiple appreciation events. In addition to the long-standing Volunteer Awards Celebration, a First Responders Appreciation Event was introduced in 2024–25, and a Health Care Worker Appreciation Event was planned for 2025–26.

In 2023, the Province of Nova Scotia enacted the Act Respecting a Memorial Day to Honour First Responders, establishing May 1 as First Responders Day and defining first responders to include a broad range of volunteer and professional emergency personnel. In response, the Municipality initiated a First Responders Appreciation Event. Due to seasonal employment commitments within the lobster fishery, the event has not been held on May 1.

The scope of invitees to the First Responders Event expanded from Fire Fighters, Police Officers, and Paramedics in 2024–25 to also include Auxiliary Coast Guard Members, Ground Search and Rescue Personnel, and Tow Truck Drivers in 2025–26. The First Responders Event is by invitation only. The Volunteer Awards Celebration is open to all volunteers, not only award recipients. All Health Care Workers, including home care workers, would have the opportunity to participate in the Health Care Appreciation Event.

Over the past two years, attendance at the Volunteer Event has declined, and Volunteer Fire Fighters have not attended following the introduction of the First Responders Event. Nominations for the First Responders Event decreased from 89 award recipients in 2024–25 to 33 in 2025–26. It is anticipated that nominations may continue to decline in future years, as many eligible individuals were recognized in the inaugural year.

In 2025–26, \$5,000 was budgeted for the Volunteer Appreciation Event, \$5,000 was budgeted for the First Responders Event, and \$5,000 was received through the Office of Healthcare Professionals Recruitment Community Fund for the Health Care Appreciation Event.

# Staff Report



Each event requires time for planning, coordination, and delivery, including participant identification, invitation management, award coordination, venue and catering arrangements, accessibility considerations, and event set-up and tear-down.

## CONSIDERATIONS

### 1. Funding Extension Request

Council may wish to direct staff to request an extension from the Office of Healthcare Professionals Recruitment (OHPR) Community Fund to carry forward the \$5,000 contribution into the 2026–27 fiscal year. This would provide flexibility in planning future appreciation initiatives while ensuring the funding remains available for its intended purpose.

### 2. Consolidation of Appreciation Events

Council may also wish to consider holding one consolidated “Community Heroes Appreciation Event” that recognizes volunteers, first responders, and health care workers collectively. A single event could support inclusivity across sectors, reduce duplication, align budget allocations, and lessen the overall administrative and logistical requirements while continuing to recognize the valuable contributions of all groups.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

*Recommend that Municipal Council direct staff to request an extension of \$5,000 of the Office of Healthcare Professionals Recruitment funding to December 1<sup>st</sup>, 2026, and to combine the Volunteer Appreciation Event, First Responder Event and the Healthcare Appreciation Event.*